

## CHAPTER 12 BUSINESS COMMUNICATIONS POLICY

### Section 1. Electronic Communications

#### 1.1 Introduction and Purpose

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provides communication systems designed to facilitate business communication among state employees and other business contacts. Those systems include telephone, facsimile (fax) machines, all computer software and any other type of electronic communication. It is the intent of OMB to provide a policy which will ensure that our employees use all communication systems appropriately.

#### 1.2 Prohibited Usage

Foul, inappropriate, or offensive messages are prohibited.

Use of communication systems to solicit outside business ventures or political or religious causes is prohibited.

Advertising or soliciting for personal enterprises and “chain letters” are prohibited.

Employees will not use security features such as codes or passwords without the express knowledge and prior approval of their division director. Employees will not use unauthorized codes or passwords to gain access to other employees’ data.

E-mail messages are capable of being forwarded without the express permission of the original author. Accordingly, due caution should be exercised when sending e-mail messages. No employee may forward any portion of a received message, which has been altered, without authorization from the author. No employee may send e-mail under another employees’ name without authorization.

To avoid introduction of viruses into your computer, exercise caution prior to opening attachments from someone you don’t know. Unsolicited attachments that cannot be verified by the sender should be deleted.

#### 1.3 Accessibility of Records

E-mail communications are public documents and may be subject to public review, unless the record is exempt by law from disclosure.

OMB reserves the right to monitor e-mail to ensure proper use of the system and to protect the interests of the agency. Any violation of the Business Communications Policy will subject the employee to disciplinary action, possibly including termination.

All agency electronic mail is an official public record and is subject to public record regulations with respect to inspection, disclosure, scheduled retention and disposition.

E-mail records must be incorporated into a records retention schedule when they meet the following criteria:

- The message is made or received under state law or in the conduct of official agency business.
- The message preserves evidence of the agency's organization, functions, or other activities.
- The message contains information of value relating to agency programs, policies, decisions, and essential transactions.

#### 1.4 Policy Exceptions

Divisions of the Office of Management and Budget may adopt more restrictive policies at their own discretion

Occasional personal correspondence that complies with the other terms of this policy is allowed, however, it should not detract from work related activities.

### Section 2. Internet Usage

#### 2.1 Introduction and Purpose

It is the intent of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to develop an Internet Usage Policy which will ensure that our employees use the Internet appropriately and thereby protect the agency from being victimized by the threat of viruses or hacking into the server.

#### 2.2 Internet Use By Employees

Internet access is limited to official business. The introduction of viruses, or malicious tampering with any computer system, is expressly prohibited.

Employees using the Internet are acting as representatives of OMB. As such, public scrutiny and/or disclosure of an employee's Internet usage must not damage the reputation of OMB. Users are expressly prohibited from accessing sites which carry offensive material. Offensive material includes, but is not limited to, pornography and hate literature.

Internet Relay Chat channels or other Internet forums such as newsgroups may only be used to conduct work related business or to exchange technical or analytical information. Users who wish to express personal opinions must use a private Internet service provider.

Employees may not place any State of North Dakota material on any publicly accessible Internet computer without prior permission.

Alternate Internet service provider connections to OMB's internal network are not permitted unless expressly authorized and properly protected by a firewall or other appropriate security device(s).

Files which are downloaded from the Internet must be scanned with virus detection software before installation or execution. All appropriate precautions should be taken to detect a virus and, if necessary, to prevent its spread.

### 2.3 Accessibility of Records

The Internet does not guarantee the privacy and confidentiality of information. Sensitive material transferred over the Internet may be at risk of detection by a third party. Employees must exercise caution and care when transferring such material in any form.

OMB reserves the right to inspect an employee's computer system for violations of the Internet Usage Policy. Any violation of this policy will subject the employee to disciplinary action, possibly including termination.

### 2.4 Policy Exceptions

Employees are permitted to access the Internet for personal business during lunch and coffee breaks as long as the use is in strict compliance with the other terms of this policy. Exceptions for use of the Internet for school or other purposes are allowed with the approval of the division director.

Divisions of the Office of Management and Budget may adopt more restrictive policies at their discretion.